(c) whether any private operators have been shown any willingness to operate hovercraft or catamaran on this sector?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN): (a) and (b) A decision is yet to be taken in this regard.

(c) Yes, Sir. Union Government had cleared applications from four private parties for acquisition of vessels for operating passenger services between Bombay and Goa. Two of these sanctions for acquisition of two Catamaran vessels are still valid.

Use of Telecast Media to educate the rural masses

255. SHRI S. K. T. RAMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state what steps have been taken by Government so far to use the telecast media to educate the rural masses in the country on the application of modern technologies in day-today- living?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. UPENDRA): Doordarshan regularly telecasts for the benefit of rural audience programmes in different regional languages aimed at educating and informing them about the improved methods of agriculture and irrigation, health care and other aspects of daily life with a view to help them to improve their living conditions. These programmes are mounted to promote a more rational and scientific approach toward life, and to counter-act prevalent superstitions.

Assamese speaking Station Director in All India Radio and Doordarshan in Assam

256. DR. NAGEN SAIKIA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in the stations of All India Radio and Doordarshan in Assam, there is no Assamese speaking Station Director;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor; and

(c) what is the number of non-Bengali speaking Directors in the All India Radio and T.V. centres of West Bengal?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. UPENDRA): (a) to (c) The post of Station Director in All India Radio and Director in Doordarshan Kendra is a supervisory post and it is not considered necessary for the Station Director/Director to know the language of the area although the knowledge of the language does give some added advantage.

Proposal to make T.V. Serials on the great saint of Assam Shankradeva

257. DR. NAGEN SAIKIA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether some proposals to make T.V. serials on the great saint of Assam Sankaradeva, and one on the 42 movement in Assam are pending in the Department;

(b) if so, by when these proposals would be taken up by the doordarshan; and

(c) if the answer to part (b) above be in negative what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. UPENDRA): (a) No, Sir. However, the production of a documentary film on "Shri Shankar Deva" was assigned earlier to M/s. Trans Asia Film of Guwahati but as the party failed to sign the agreement prescribed for the purpose, the offer had to be withdrawn.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Tamil Refugees in India

258. PROF. SOURENDRA BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Sri Lankan Tamil refugees who have taken a shelter in India since the virtual liquidation of the EPRLF-led Government of North-east Sri Lanka;

(b) the number who have taken shelter in India since the Sri Lankan army started military operation against LTTE;

(c) whether the Government of India would look after them so long as they are in India; and

(d) whether the question of their repatriation to their home and hearth in Sri Lanka in a peaceful atmosphere is proposed to be taken up with the Government of Sri Lanka?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY): (a) From 1st March, 1990 to 31st July, 1990, 47,546 Sri Lankan Tamil refugees have taken shelter in India.

(b) From 12th June, 1990 to 31st July, 1990, 46,810 Sri Lanka Tamil refugees arrived in India.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Yes, Sir.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister's proposal on Tamil Refugees

259. PROF. SOURENDRA BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu proposed that the Government of India take up with Sri Lanka Government the setting up of Tamil refugees settlement of Jafna in view of progressively increasing influx of refugees to Tamil Nadu.

(b) if so, what is the Government of India's response in the matter;

(c) whether any action has been taken in this regard; and

(d) if not, by when the action is proposed to be taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I. K. GUJRAL): (a) to (d) The idea of setting up refugee camps in Sri Lanka itself was mooted during the recent visit of a Sri Lankan Parliamentary delegation to India. Government views this positively and has suggested to the Sri Lankan Government that such camps can be set up under the supervision of international agencies and that Government is willing to assist the Sri Lanka Government in this matter.

Amnesty International's visit to different places in India

260. PROF. SOURENDRA BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Amnesty International has made any visit to Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir or any other terrorist-affected area of India since the lifting of the ban on its visit to India by the preceding Government;